

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Matt Disston, President
Mike Safranski, Vice President
Glenn Acosta, Director
Jim Haselton, Director
Ed Mandich, Director

GENERAL MANAGER
Don Chadd



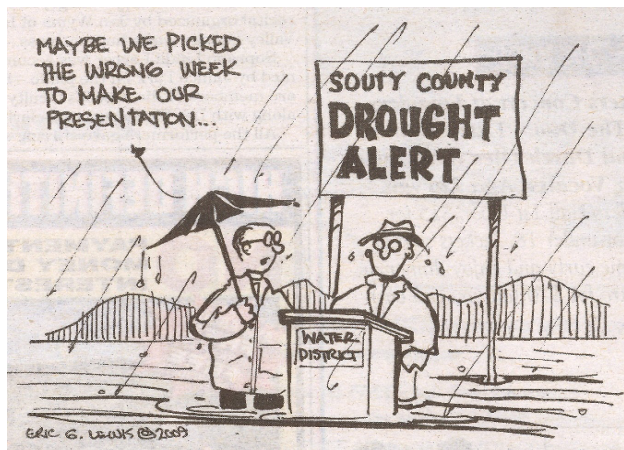
On Tap

Volume 15 Issue 3

March 2009

How can there be a drought if it is raining?

Recently, representatives of Trabuco Canyon Water District presented information at a City Council meeting in Rancho Santa Margarita concerning the statewide drought, as well as information concerning the provisions of the Water Conservation Ordinance recently adopted by the Trabuco Canyon Water District. As timing would have it, this presentation occurred in February when there was a lot of rainfall in Southern California. Subsequently, the cartoon printed below appeared in the local edition of the Orange County Register; it is reprinted here with the permission of the newspaper.



The cleverness of the cartoonist is not lost on the folks at TCWD. Indeed, the irony of speaking about a statewide drought and the need for water conservation during a rain storm is perplexing.

But, perhaps this brings an opportunity to explain the answer to the question that is frequently posed to representatives of water districts any time there is measurable rainfall locally.

Question: It has been raining quite a bit, so the drought is over, right? Answer: Unfortunately, no. Here is why:

Most of southern California depends heavily on imported water, either from northern California (delivered through the State Water Project Aqueduct) or from the Colorado River (delivered through the Colorado River Aqueduct).

Local rain certainly helps, but not enough. It is used to recharge local underground water basins. And rain events certainly decrease the amount of imported water used to landscape for a period of time. But the impact on the drought condition is minimal.

As an example, if the entire reservoir system throughout the state was thought of as a single average residential swimming pool, the amount of water in that pool right now, if it reflected the statewide reservoir water supply, would be one fourth full of water. No residential pool owner would feel good about that. And if the pool owner could put one

TCWD'S ON TAP

single cup of water into the pool, it would help, but not much. The single cup of water would represent the impact of local rainfall on the statewide drought.

So what is needed to end the drought? Lots of rain and snow along the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range in Northern California. The more snow the better, along with a very cool spring so the snow doesn't melt rapidly.

This is also true for the mountain ranges that supply the river tributaries in the southwestern states that supply the Colorado River.

How much you ask? The answer to this varies depending on which "expert" you ask. But the answers range from five to eight years of above average rainfall and snow fall, followed by an increase in snow pack levels, to turn the statewide drought condition around.

LAKE OROVILLE RESERVOIR

Last month, you were provided a billing insert which showed pictures of Lake Oroville in [2005](#) and [2008](#). The pictures were noteworthy because they showed the dramatic drop in the water level in one of the State's major reservoirs. We have added these pictures, plus a more recent photo from February of [2009](#), on the District's website under Water Conservation. It is worth the time to look at the most recent picture; it is stunning.

TCWD'S WATER CONSERVATION ORDINANCE

This [ordinance](#) went into effect on January 1, 2009. The [permanent provisions](#) of the ordinance are included

in this mailing. The District encourages you to discuss these provisions with family and friends. The statewide drought is very serious, and using water wisely from now on needs to be a way of life. The entire ordinance can be seen on the District's website.

The Regular Board Meeting is held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the District's office located at 32003 Dove Canyon Drive, Trabuco Canyon. The public is encouraged to attend.

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

- ☐ February 18, 2009 – Received status updates relating to the Water, Reclaimed and Recycled Water Rate Study and the Water Conservation Ordinance.
- ☐ Discussed the Shadow Rock Detention Basin Project.
- ☐ Received status updates relating to the Baker Regional Water Treatment Plant and Rose Canyon and Lang Wells Upgrades to Treatment Facilities Projects.

ON TAP is published and distributed by TCWD.

We welcome your comments, suggestions and questions. Please call or write Sharon E. Smith, Editor

TCWD's *ON-TAP*
Trabuco Canyon Water District
32003 Dove Canyon Drive
Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679
(949) 858-0277 (Telephone 858-3025
(Facsimile)
www.tcwd.ca.gov